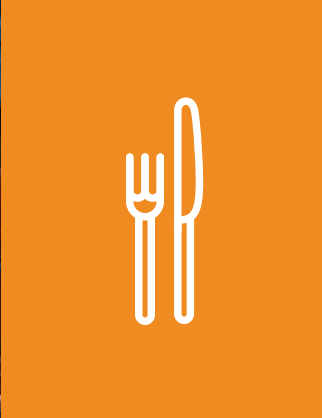


A first-person perspective from inside a tent looking out at a snowy forest. The tent's orange and yellow interior is visible at the top. The forest is filled with snow-covered evergreen trees. In the foreground, a person's legs in black pants and boots are visible, sitting on a black tarp. A silver metal cup is in the person's hands. A pair of black boots sits on the tarp to the right.

# PHASE II: TOURISM CRISIS MARKETING GRANT GUIDELINES

EXPLORE **m** MINNESOTA™







## **EXPLORE MINNESOTA MISSION**

To inspire consumers and facilitate their travel to and within the state of Minnesota.

## **PHASE II TOURISM CRISIS MARKETING GRANT PURPOSE**

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) in Minnesota have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Minnesota DMOs rely on the tax dollars generated by tourism as a source of funding for tourism marketing and the promotion of their communities. With travel restricted to help curb the virus' spread and subsequent loss of tax dollars, organizations whose primary purpose is to market their communities are now facing massive budget shortfalls.

The Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant is designed to supplement lost marketing dollars to individual, established non-profit DMOs and primary tourism promotion agencies so they are able to remain visible to customers, and continue to stimulate travel for the economic benefit of their communities.



## ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

A private, non-profit Minnesota organization whose primary purpose is to promote its community or area as a tourism destination, and/or has the promotion of its community or area as a tourism destination as a major part of its work, such as:

- Convention and Visitors bureaus
- Tourism Bureaus or Visitors bureaus
- Chambers of Commerce
- Civic and Commerce Associations
- Statewide associations, Scenic Byway Organizations and similar organizations dedicated to tourism marketing that have participated in the Marketing Grant Program within the last three years;
- Native American tribes are eligible for projects focusing on Native American cultural heritage tourism;
- Qualifying border communities with Minnesota Tax ID numbers may apply with marketing directed toward their Minnesota product. Note: The Explore Minnesota logo must be used exclusively (no other state logo) in this program's advertising efforts.

For the purpose of this document, these organizations are referred to as Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO).

There is only one eligible organization per community. If more than one eligible organization applies for the same community or area, requestors must decide which organization will be eligible for funding. Only one application accepted for any community or area.

## DETERMINATION OF AWARD

Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant award levels are based on the applicant's average use of Explore Minnesota's Tourism Marketing Grant Program (actual dollars consumed) over the past three years (2017, 2018, 2019).

- 2020 awards are not used as a determining factor, due to an incomplete grant cycle.
- Only years for which a grant was awarded will be factored into the determination of award levels.
- Grants are based on historical consumption and not on organizational budgets.



## AWARD LEVELS

Explore Minnesota will notify grantees of their Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant award level. Award levels were determined by grantees who have utilized Explore Minnesota's Tourism Marketing Grant Program in 2017 and/or 2018 and/or 2019.

Applicant 3-year average	May Receive up to
First Time*	\$1,250
Up to \$1,000	\$1,875
\$1,001 to \$2,000	\$3,750
\$2,001 to \$3,000	\$5,625
\$3,001 to \$4,000	\$7,500
\$4,001 to \$5,000	\$10,000
\$5,001 to \$6,000	\$12,500
Over \$6,001	\$17,500

\*Qualifying DMOs and primary tourism organizations that did not utilize the Tourism Marketing Grant program in 2017, 2018 or 2019 may receive up to \$1,250 as a first-time award.

## MATCH DOLLARS

There are no grantee match requirements in the Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant Program.

## CYCLE & TERMS

- Grant applications can be made until March 15, 2021.
- Grant program funds may only be used from **the date of an executed contract through December 31, 2021.**
- One application per eligible organization and one award per application.
- Organizations experiencing a financial hardship may apply for a financial advance. The grantee must complete and submit an Application for Financial Advance. The request is subject to a review and approval process and applicant will be notified if accepted.
- Failure to submit adequate reconciliation documents will result in repayment of received grant funds and may impact eligibility of future marketing grants.
- Invoices, statements, tear sheets of advertising and proof of payment equal or exceeding the amount of the grant award must be **received by Explore Minnesota by or before February 15, 2022.**
- Requests received after February 15, 2022 will not be processed and will be ineligible for reimbursement under this program.
- Allow up to 30 days for reconciliation, processing and receipt of funds.

## ELIGIBLE TACTICS

Phase II Crisis Marketing Grant funds can be utilized for the following tactics only:

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Google AdWords and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Production of photo and video assets
- Website development and enhancement, including content creation through a vendor (hosting and maintenance fees are not eligible)
- Media production, ad creation, graphic design services
- Visitor guide production, development and distribution
- Direct Mail
- Social media management through a vendor
- New and existing event operations support held within the executed grant contract dates, subject to limitations
- Print advertising
  - » Phase II Tourism Crisis Grant funds can be used for:
    - advertising in 2021 Biking Guide
    - advertising in the MN Explorer Newspaper (Winter 2020 and Spring/Summer 2021 only)
    - advertising in destination or community guides
- Digital advertising
- Television and video advertising
- Radio and audio streaming advertising
- Billboard/Out of Home advertising
- Paid social media advertising

**No other activities qualify for Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant funding.**

## ELIGIBLE CAMPAIGN AUDIENCES

Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant funds can be utilized for the following audiences only:

- Consumer advertising: campaigns targeting individual consumers.
- Trade advertising: campaigns targeted to meetings, conventions, sports, group tour, travel agents and travel planners who influence and plan travel to Minnesota on behalf of their organizations, associations or clients.





## ADVERTISING GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

- There are no minimum or maximum geographical radius for advertising placement.
- There is no in-state or out of state requirements (as in previous Tourism Marketing Grant program).
- Grant dollars can be used for promotion to local, state, regional, national or international audiences.

## ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

Program funding runs from December 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021.

Grant eligibility period for this program is between December 1, 2020\* to December 31, 2021.

**PLEASE NOTE: Advertising prior to the date of a fully-executed contract between grant recipient and Explore Minnesota will not be eligible for reimbursement.**

## ELIGIBLE ADVERTISING RUN DATES

- All advertising must be completed inside of the eligibility period and fully executed by December 31, 2021.
- No pre-payment of advertising is allowed.
- No post-dated invoices will be allowed.
- No advertising bundles or packages with dates outside of the eligibility period will be accepted. Eligible expenses must be separated by the vendor and presented as a separate contract and invoice for payment.

**Explore Minnesota will not prorate any invoices or programs. Invoices or contracts must be issued by the vendor and advertising buys separated or prorated by the grantee will not be allowed.**

## EXPLORE MINNESOTA LOGO REQUIREMENTS

Current logos are available on the industry website, [exploreminnesota.com/industry](https://exploreminnesota.com/industry).

1. All grantees are required to add a current Explore Minnesota logo with a link to [exploreminnesota.com](https://exploreminnesota.com) to the homepage of their website. It is recommended that the grantee place a current Explore Minnesota logo with link to [exploreminnesota.com](https://exploreminnesota.com) in the footer of their website.
2. A current Explore Minnesota logo must be used in all grant projects listed below:
  - Print advertising
  - Digital display advertising
    - » Mobile ads sized 320x50 where the Explore Minnesota logo cannot be accommodated must link to a landing page where the Explore Minnesota logo is present.
    - » Native campaigns must include #OnlyinMN if the Explore Minnesota logo cannot be accommodated
  - Television
  - Billboards/Out of Home
  - Visitor Guide Cover
  - Direct Mail
  - The size of the logo must be legible and proportionate to the size of the ad.
3. Organic social media posts administered by a third-party vendor require use of the **#OnlyinMN** hashtag and the inclusion of the Explore Minnesota handle (Twitter: @exploreminn, Facebook @exploreminnesota, Instagram: @exploreminnesota, Pinterest: @exploreminn)
  - Paid social media on Facebook and Instagram requires use of Facebook's branded content tool. For help, visit [facebook.com/business/help/1512279682412364](https://facebook.com/business/help/1512279682412364) and contact [caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us](mailto:caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us) or [derek.ramthun@state.mn.us](mailto:derek.ramthun@state.mn.us)
  - Paid social media on Twitter requires use of the #OnlyinMN hashtag and the inclusion of the Explore Minnesota Twitter handle @ExploreMinn
4. Explore Minnesota must be mentioned in any radio/audio streaming voiceover scripts.

**PLEASE NOTE: No exceptions to the above; there will be no hardship waivers granted for exclusion of the Explore Minnesota logo. Failure to include a current Explore Minnesota logo in grant projects will result in cancellation of that project and repayment of all received funds.**

Current logos are available on the industry website, [exploreminnesota.com/industry](https://exploreminnesota.com/industry).



## NEW & EXISTING EVENT OPERATIONS

Grant funds from the Phase II Crisis Marketing Grant Program can be used for new or existing event operations and promotion but are subject to limitations.

Qualifying new or existing event dates must take place during the executed grant contract effective dates.

**If you have any questions about qualifying your event for this program, please contact your regional Partner Relations representative before incurring expenses.**

## ELIGIBLE EVENTS:

Any new or existing event that operates for a limited period of time and is open to the general public, without admission or entry fee. Eligible events are organized for the purpose of attracting visitors to the community, generating revenue for the non-profit organizer, elevating awareness for the community and/or for entertainment purposes, which may include:

- Exhibitions
- Fairs
- Festivals
- Entertainment
- Sports competitions
- Leisure events
- Ongoing performance series

## INELIGIBLE EVENTS INCLUDE:

- Political events
- Meetings and conventions
- Trade shows and expositions
- Fundraisers and benefits
- Award ceremonies and banquets

## ELIGIBLE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Eligible operational expenses apply only to non-ticketed portions of events and may include:

- Fees for third-party services such as audio/visual, security, medical staff, officials/referees, and traffic control
- Sports sanctioning fees
- Facility rental
- Insurance
- Permits and license fees
- Temporary structures, furniture, production equipment, fencing, temporary restrooms, and garbage service and rentals
- Photography and videos of event
- Contracted entertainment
- Event marketing (see eligible tactics in this program)



## INELIGIBLE EVENT EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses for events include, but are not limited to:

- Employee payroll
- Fundraising
- Sponsorships
- Prize money
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages
- Signage
- Supplies
- Promotional materials
- Clothing and merchandise
- Leasing of motor vehicles
- Purchase or production of items for resale
- Acquisition of land or buildings
- Promotion of state public officials individually named
- Lobbyists
- Political contributions
- Late payment fees; finance charges or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations
- Payment of tax obligations or charitable contributions
- Payment of debt
- Travel expenses
- Third-party promoters, site selectors and commissions are ineligible for state funds

## INSTANCE OF EVENT CANCELCATION

**PLEASE NOTE:** In the instance of cancelation of an event, advanced grant funds will have to repaid to the state if grantee is unable to utilize funds in other eligible campaigns within the grant program.



## PHASE II TOURISM CRISIS MARKETING GRANT

### INELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

- Multi-community grant applications
- Private, for-profit businesses
- Local units of government
- Any organization that is not the designated Destination Marketing Organization for its community
- Statewide associations not previously funded under the Marketing Grant Program (years 2017, 2018, 2019)

### INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The following expenses are not eligible for Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant funding\*:

- The following Explore Minnesota programs:
  - » co-op advertising
  - » partnerships
  - » advertising on exploreminnesota.com
  - » Minnesota Governor's Opener events
- Internal staff time
- Media or advertising agency fees
- Tradeshow
- Sales calls
- Display materials
- Public relations projects and tactics
- Research projects
- Travel expenses
- Entertainment
- Purchase of food or alcoholic beverages
- Tourism development or infrastructure projects
- Promotional products
- Website maintenance or hosting
- Ads or content that appear on a political or unsavory website or publication, at the discretion of Explore Minnesota

\*This list may not include all ineligible expenses. Please consult with Explore Minnesota prior to implementation if you have questions about eligibility of expenses. For clarification or to determine eligibility please contact your Regional Partner Relations Representative.

# GRANT PROCESS

## GRANT APPLICATION

1. Explore Minnesota will notify eligible grantees with a Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant award letter and associated documents..
2. **Grantee must complete and return a Phase II Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant application no later than March 15, 2021.** Application must be received electronically or postmarked by this date. Funds not claimed by this date will be returned and used at the agency's discretion.
3. Requests are reviewed and subject to approval by Explore Minnesota.
4. Grant contracts are generated, funds are encumbered and required signatures are secured. **PLEASE NOTE: Projects may not begin until the contract is fully executed, which is the date the last signature is obtained.** Commitments (i.e. ad space reservations) may be made prior to this date, but no reimbursement will be paid if invoices are dated prior to the date of a fully executed grant contract.
5. Explore Minnesota will send grantee the following reconciliation materials:
  - Executed grant contract
  - (Optional) Application for Financial Advance
  - Grant Completion Checklist form
  - Project Summary and Evaluation form
  - Request for Reimbursement form, if applicable

## GRANT RECONCILIATION

6. **All grant reconciliation materials and all supporting documentation must be e-mailed or postmarked to Explore Minnesota no later than February 15, 2022. Only one submission per grant. PLEASE NOTE: no partial reimbursements will be accepted.**
7. The following items are required for reimbursement:
  - Grant Completion Checklist form
  - Completed Request for Reimbursement form
  - Completed Project Summary and Evaluation forms
  - Copies of all vendor invoices or statements with dates of service
  - Proof of payment
    - » Proof of payment includes vendor statements showing a zero balance, receipts, canceled checks or credit card/bank statements showing payment with account information redacted
  - Screenshot of grantee's website homepage displaying EMT logo linkable to [exploreminnesota.com](http://exploreminnesota.com)
  - For each type of campaign, the following must be submitted:
    - » Print – Original copy or tear sheet with Explore Minnesota logo
    - » Visitor Guide – Original copy or tear sheet with Explore Minnesota logo and addresses
    - » Direct Mail – Original copy or tear sheet with Explore Minnesota logo and addresses
    - » Digital – Screenshot of advertisements with Explore Minnesota logo
    - » Television or video – Link to video with Explore Minnesota logo



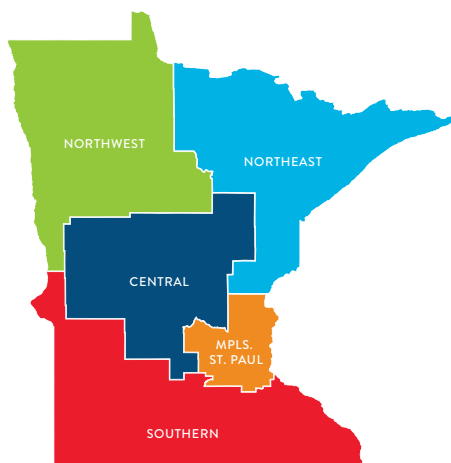
- » Radio/Streaming audio voiceover – Copy of script and audio file recognizing Explore Minnesota
  - » Billboard/out of home – Photo or screenshot with Explore Minnesota logo
  - » Social Media – Organic posts administered by a third-party vendor require use of the #OnlyinMN hashtag and the inclusion of the Explore Minnesota handle (Twitter: @exploreminn, Facebook @exploreminnesota, Instagram: @exploreminnesota, Pinterest: @exploreminn)
  - » Paid social media on Facebook and Instagram requires use of Facebook's branded content tool. For help, visit [facebook.com/business/help/1512279682412364](https://facebook.com/business/help/1512279682412364) and contact [caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us](mailto:caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us) or [derek.ramthun@state.mn.us](mailto:derek.ramthun@state.mn.us)
  - » Paid social media on Twitter requires use of the #OnlyinMN hashtag and the inclusion of the Explore Minnesota Twitter handle (@ExploreMinn)
8. If no financial advance was awarded, Explore Minnesota will reimburse for funds within 30 days after determining that the grantee has satisfactorily fulfilled all the terms of their grant agreement, and has received all reconciliation materials.
9. **PLEASE NOTE: If grantee requests a financial advance due to hardship status and is unable to completely satisfy the requirements of the grant program, this may result in full repayment of the advanced grant funds to Explore Minnesota.**
10. IRS rules require government entities to file 1099-G forms for certain government payments. Minnesota Management and Budget will be issuing 1099-G forms for these contracts. Please check with your organization's tax expert to determine what effect this may have on your IRS filing.

For clarification or to determine eligibility please contact your Regional Partner Relations Representative.

## RECORDS RETENTION

Under Minnesota law, grant records must be kept available for a period of six years.

## EXPLORE MINNESOTA TOURISM PARTNER RELATIONS



### SENIOR MANAGER, PARTNER RELATIONS

#### BETH HELLE

121 7th Place East, Suite 360  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-757-1872  
[beth.helle@state.mn.us](mailto:beth.helle@state.mn.us)

### SOUTHERN REGION

#### LISA HAVELKA

PO Box 454  
Medford, MN 55049  
507-389-2683  
[lisa.havelka@state.mn.us](mailto:lisa.havelka@state.mn.us)

### NORTHEAST REGION

#### NICOLE LALUM

PO Box 900  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472  
Phone: 218-316-3330  
Mobile: 218-232-0883  
[nicole.lalum@state.mn.us](mailto:nicole.lalum@state.mn.us)

### CENTRAL REGION

#### NICOLE LALUM

PO Box 900  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472  
Phone: 218-316-3330  
Mobile: 218-232-0883  
[nicole.lalum@state.mn.us](mailto:nicole.lalum@state.mn.us)

### NORTHWEST REGION

#### DAVID BERGMAN

PO Box 725  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
218-681-0997  
[david.bergman@state.mn.us](mailto:david.bergman@state.mn.us)

### MINNEAPOLIS- ST. PAUL REGION

#### LORI PETERSON

121 7th Place East, Suite 360  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-757-1876  
[lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us](mailto:lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us)

### PARTNER RELATIONS SUPPORT

#### DAWN BUSHMAN

PO Box 900  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472  
218-316-3333  
[dawn.bushman@state.mn.us](mailto:dawn.bushman@state.mn.us)



Explore Minnesota  
121 7th Place East, Suite 360  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101, USA

[exploreminnesota.com/industry](https://exploreminnesota.com/industry)